



Essential Standards for High School Social Studies Courses

North Carolina Assessment Specifications Summary

Measures of Student Learning for World History, American History I, American History II, and Civics & Economics

Purpose of the Assessments

- Measures of Student Learning: North Carolina's Common Exams for High School Social Studies courses will measure students' academic progress in the *Essential Standards*, adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education in June 2010.
- Common Exam scores (along with any other relevant end-of-course or end-of-grade assessment scores) will be used in the Educational Value Added Assessment System (EVAAS) to produce student growth measures to satisfy Standards 6 and 8 of the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System.
- For more information on the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System go to <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/educatoreffect/>.
- Common Exams were developed to replace locally developed assessments, providing teachers and principals with a common measure for all students state-wide during a given testing window. Educators are encouraged to use Common Exam scores (in combination with other relevant measures) in determining students' final grades for each course. LEAs are encouraged to adopt policies regarding the use of Common Exam results in assigning final grades.
- Common Exams will NOT be used for school and district accountability under the READY Accountability Model or for Federal reporting purposes.

Curriculum Cycle

- 2010: North Carolina State Board of Education adoption of the *Essential Standards*.
- 2011–2012: Item development for the Common Exams.
- 2012–2013: First year the Common Exams will be administered operationally.

Standards

- The *Essential Standards* are posted at:
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/new-standards>.

Prioritization of Standards

- The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction invited teachers to collaborate and develop recommendations for a prioritization of the standards indicating the relative importance of each standard, the anticipated instructional time, and the appropriateness of the standard for multiple-choice and constructed response item formats. Subsequently, curriculum and test development staff from the North Carolina Department of Public

Instruction met to review the results from the teacher panels and to develop weight distributions across the domains for each grade level.

- Tables 1 through 4 describe the range of percentage of test questions that will appear on a given form of the Common Exams in World History, American History I, American History II, and Civics and Economics. All of these Common Exams will contain both multiple choice (MC) items (65% to 75%) and constructed response (CR) items (25% to 35%). Half of the testing time and half of the total score points are allocated to answering the CR questions; as such, they will be worth 2, 3 or 4 points each. The greater emphasis on CR questions in Social Studies reflects the conceptual nature of the standards which are best measured with open-ended questions. In order to ensure that the four dimensions of historical thinking remain central to the history tests, item developers incorporated standard 1 across as many MC and CR history items as possible (Tables 1 – 3).

Table 1. Test Specification Weights for the MSL for World History

Standard 1	Standard 2	Multiple Choice	Constructed Response
WH.1	WH.2	16% to 20%	2% to 4%
WH.1	WH.3	6% to 9%	2% to 4%
WH.1	WH.4	6% to 9%	2% to 4%
WH.1	WH.5	6% to 9%	2% to 4%
WH.1	WH.6	6% to 9%	2% to 4%
WH.1	WH.7	8% to 12%	2% to 4%
WH.1	WH.8	12% to 16%	2% to 4%
Total percent of items		65%-75%	25%-35%
<i>Total percent of score points</i>		<i>48-52%</i>	<i>48-52%</i>

Table 2. Test Specification Weights for the MSL for American History I

Standard 1	Standard 2	Multiple Choice	Constructed Response
AH1.H.1	AH1.H.2	6% to 9%	2% to 4%
AH1.H.1	AH1.H.3	13% to 15%	2% to 4%
AH1.H.1	AH1.H.4	13% to 15%	2% to 4%
AH1.H.1	AH1.H.5	6% to 9%	2% to 4%
AH1.H.1	AH1.H.6	6% to 9%	2% to 4%
AH1.H.1	AH1.H.7	8% to 12%	2% to 4%
AH1.H.1	AH1.H.8	6% to 9%	0%
Total percent of items		65%-75%	25%-35%
<i>Total percent of score points</i>		<i>48-52%</i>	<i>48-52%</i>

Table 3. Test Specification Weights for the MSL for American History II

Standard 1	Standard 2	Multiple Choice	Constructed Response
AH1.H.1	AH1.H.2	6% to 9%	2% to 4%
AH1.H.1	AH1.H.3	13% to 15%	2% to 4%
AH1.H.1	AH1.H.4	13% to 15%	2% to 4%
AH1.H.1	AH1.H.5	6% to 9%	2% to 4%
AH1.H.1	AH1.H.6	6% to 9%	2% to 4%
AH1.H.1	AH1.H.7	8% to 12%	2% to 4%
AH1.H.1	AH1.H.8	6% to 9%	0%
Total percent of items		65%-75%	25%-35%
<i>Total percent of score points</i>		<i>48-52%</i>	<i>48-52%</i>

Table 4. Test Specification Weights for the MSL for Civics and Economics

Standard	Multiple Choice	Constructed Response
CE.C&G.1	2% to 4%	0% to 4%
CE.C&G.2	8% to 12%	0% to 5%
CE.C&G.3	8% to 12%	0% to 5%
CE.C&G.4	6% to 9%	0% to 4%
CE.C&G.5	6% to 9%	0% to 4%
CE.PFL.	13% to 16%	0% to 4%
CE.E.	18% to 23%	0% to 4%
Total percent of items		25%-35%
<i>Total percent of score points</i>		<i>48-52%</i>

Cognitive Rigor

- The items on the Common Exams in Social Studies were aligned to the Essential Standards using the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (RBT). To learn more about RBT go to: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/>.

Types of Items

- The Common Exams will consist of four-response-option MC items.
- Many of the items will require the student to read, interpret, and/or analyze stimulus material, including maps, graphs, and excerpts of primary and secondary-source documents.
- All Common Exams in Social Studies will contain CR items. The CR items allow students to demonstrate their understanding in one of two ways. First, students may be asked to respond to a prompt and stimulus using skills learned during the course. Secondly, students may be asked to show their knowledge of social studies concepts through written expression.

Testing Structure and Time

- All Common Exams will be two forty-five minute parts. Students will have forty minutes to respond to each part. Students should monitor the clock to ensure they allow themselves adequate time to respond to the questions.
- Part one will contain eighteen to twenty-one MC items. Part two will contain eight to ten CR items. Students should monitor the clock to ensure they allow themselves adequate time to respond to the questions.
- It is a local decision to determine if the Common Exams will be given in one or two class periods.

Delivery Mode

- The Common Exams are designed for paper/pencil mode; however, some districts may choose to convert the paper/pencil test for online administration through their own online administration systems. It is a local decision to determine if the Common Exams will be administered in paper/pencil or online.